CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   A method for accessing information from an overall collection of metadata records, wherein the overall collection includes a local database of metadata records and
5   a remote database of metadata records, and wherein each metadata record in the overall collection includes information regarding a particular digital media source, the method comprising:

in response to user interaction with a user interface, identifying at least one selection criterion for selecting metadata records from which to display information;

10   retrieving a candidate set of metadata records from the remote database;

identifying a remote set of metadata records in the candidate set that satisfy the at least one selection criterion;

identifying a local set of metadata records in the local database that satisfy the at least one selection criterion;

15   merging the remote set and the local set to produce a merged set of metadata records that satisfy the at least one selection criterion; and

displaying selected information from at least one metadata record in the merged set.

20   2.   The method of claim 1, wherein displaying selected information from at least one metadata record in the merged set comprises:

displaying at least one artist name.

3.   The method of claim 1, wherein displaying selected information from at least one metadata record in the merged set comprises:

displaying at least one album title.

5   4.   The method of claim 1, wherein displaying selected information from at least one metadata record in the merged set comprises:

displaying at least one playlist title.

5.   The method of claim 1, wherein displaying selected information from at 10   least one metadata record in the merged set comprises:

displaying at least one movie title.

6.   The method of claim 1, wherein displaying selected information from at least one metadata record in the merged set comprises:

15   displaying at least one track name.

7.   The method of claim 1, wherein displaying selected information from at least one metadata record in the merged set comprises:

displaying at least one cover graphic.

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8.   The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one selection criterion selects metadata records that fall within a consecutive range in the overall collection based on a predetermined ordering method.

9.   The method of claim 8, wherein the predetermined ordering method specifies alphabetic ordering based on artist name followed by album name.

10.   The method of claim 8, further comprising:

5   obtaining a sparse map of the remote database; and

identifying the candidate set based on the sparse map.

11.   A method for accessing information from an overall collection of metadata records, wherein each metadata record in the overall collection includes information

10   regarding a particular digital media source, and wherein the overall collection including a local database of metadata records and a remote database of metadata records, each metadata record in the local database being associated with a local record number based on its order in the local database and a collection record number based on its order in the overall collection, each metadata record in the remote database being associated with a

15   remote record number based on its order in the remote database and a collection record number based on its order in the overall collection, the method comprising:

in response to user interaction with a user interface, the user interface requesting a specified range of N collection record numbers;

obtaining a sparse map of the remote database;

20   identifying a candidate set of metadata records based on the sparse map;

retrieving the candidate set of metadata records from the remote database;

identifying a remote set of metadata records in the candidate set that have collection record numbers in the specified range;

identifying a local set of metadata records in the local database that have collection record numbers in the specified range;

merging the remote set and the local set to produce a merged set of metadata records;

5   providing the merged set of metadata records to the user interface;

the user interface displaying selected information from at least one metadata record in the merged set.

12.   The method of claim 11, wherein displaying selected information from at

10   least one metadata record in the merged set comprises:

displaying at least one artist name.

13.   The method of claim 1, wherein displaying selected information from at least one metadata record in the merged set comprises:

15   displaying at least one album title.

14.   The method of claim 11, wherein displaying selected information from at least one metadata record in the merged set comprises:

displaying at least one playlist title.

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15.   The method of claim 11, wherein displaying selected information from at least one metadata record in the merged set comprises:

displaying at least one movie title.

16.   The method of claim 11, wherein displaying selected information from at least one metadata record in the merged set comprises:

displaying at least one track name.

5   17.   The method of claim 1, wherein displaying selected information from at least one metadata record in the merged set comprises:

displaying at least one cover graphic.

18.   The method of claim 1, wherein obtaining a sparse map comprises:

10   retrieving every S^{th} metadata record in the remote database to obtain a sparse set of metadata records.

19.   The method of claim 18, wherein identifying a candidate set of metadata records based on the sparse map comprises:

15   identifying a greatest lower bound metadata record in the sparse set by identifying which metadata record in the sparse set has the highest collection record number that does not exceed the lowest collection record number in the specified range; and

identifying a set of $N + S$ consecutive remote record numbers, beginning with the remote record number of the greatest lower bound metadata record.

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20.   A digital media system, comprising:

an optical disc changer containing a plurality of optical discs;

a digital media server, wherein the digital media server stores a plurality of digital

media files and includes a remote database of metadata records containing information

5   regarding the digital media files; and

a changer control system communicatively coupled to the optical disc changer

and to the digital media server, wherein the changer control system comprises:

(a)   a local database of metadata records containing information

regarding the optical discs in the optical disc changer;

10   (b)   a user interface for allowing a user to access information regarding

the optical discs in the optical disc changer and the digital media

files stored in the digital media server; and

(c)   a file system for creating, in response to a request from the user

interface, a merged set of metadata records from selected metadata

15   records in the local database and selected metadata records in the

remote database.

21.   The digital media system of claim 20, wherein the optical disc changer is a

compact disc (CD) changer containing a plurality of CDs.

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22.   The digital media system of claim 20, wherein the optical disc changer is a

digital versatile disc (DVD) changer containing a plurality of audio DVDs.

23. The digital media system of claim 20, wherein the optical disc changer is a digital versatile disc (DVD) changer containing a plurality of video DVDs.

5   24. The digital media system of claim 20, wherein the digital media server stores a plurality of MP3 files.

25. The digital media system of claim 20, wherein the changer control system further comprises an MP3 player.

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26. The digital media system of claim 20, further comprising a user input device communicatively coupled to the changer control system.

27. The digital media system of claim 20, further comprising an audio

15   amplifier communicatively coupled to the changer control system.

28. The digital media system of claim 20, further comprising a display device communicatively coupled to the changer control system.

20   29. The digital media system of claim 28, wherein the user interface displays on the display device selected information from at least one metadata record in the merged set.